

Message Text

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53

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 PC-04 DRC-01 /120 W

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R 271225Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3016

INFO AMCONSUL RECIFE

AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

AMCONSUL BELEM

AMCONSUL PORTO ALEGRE

AMCONSUL SALVADOR

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BRASILIA 2994

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, BR

SUBJ: PRESIDENT GEISEL GIVES PUBLIC IMPETUS TO
CHURCH-STATE RAPPROCHEMENT

SUMMARY: THE PRESENCE OF PRESIDENT GEISEL AND SOME MEMBERS OF HIS CABINET AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE PAPAL NUNCIATURE IN BRASILIA HAS GIVEN PUBLIC EXPOSURE TO THE NEW ADMINISTRATION'S PREVIOUSLY LOW-KEY APPROACH TO CHURCH AUTHORITIES. THIS ACTION IS PROBABLY INTENDED TO ADD TO THE GEISEL ADMINISTRATION'S AURA OF RELATIVE "OPENNESS," BUT WILL UNDOUBTEDLY CAUSE SOME GRUMBLING AMONG HARDLINERS. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENT AND MRS. GEISEL, ALONG WITH SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE GEISEL CABINET (INCLUDING ARMY MINISTER DALE COUTINHO), TOOK PROMINENT PART IN THE INAUGURATION OF THE PAPAL NUNCIATURE IN BRASILIA ON APRIL 24. THE HEAVILY PUBLICIZED AFFAIR, WHICH BROUGHT TOGETHER TWO
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OF BRAZIL'S FOUR CARDINALS AND MAJOR PERSONALITIES OF

THE GEISEL ADMINISTRATION, FEATURED TELEVISED EXCERPTS
SHOWING PRESIDENT GEISEL EXCHANGING ABRACOS WITH
CHURCH OFFICIALS AND USUALLY FLANKED BY CARDINALS SALLES
AND AVELAR BRANDAO.

2. COMMENT: ACCORDING TO CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES MAJORITY
LEADER CELIO BORJA, THE INAUGURATION WAS A CAREFULLY
ORCHESTRATED AFFAIR, CLOSELY COORDINATED BETWEEN THE
GEISEL ADMINISTRATION AND THE CHURCH HIERACHY. THE
EMBASSY BELIEVES IT REPRESENTS PUBLIC EVIDENCE OF THE
GEISEL ADMINISTRATION'S DESIRE TO GIVE THE APPEARANCE OF
CORDIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN STATE AND CHURCH, AND ENHANCES
THE ADMINISTRATION'S CREDENTIALS FOR FLEXIBILITY AND
"OPENNESS." IT WILL ALSO UNDOUBTEDLY CAUSE SOME GRUMBLING
AMONG THOSE HARDLINERS, BOTH CIVIL AND MILITARY, WHO FELT
MORE COMFORTABLE WITH THE MEDICI STYLE OF GOVERNMENT.
CRIMMINS

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